

# Virginia Board of Dentistry

## PROPOSED REGULATIONS FOR GENERAL SUPERVISION OF DENTAL HYGIENISTS

(Pursuant to Chapter 170 of the 2002 Acts of the Assembly)

### **18 VAC 60-20-10. Definitions.**

The following words and terms when used in this chapter shall have the following meanings, unless the content clearly indicates otherwise:

"Advertising" means a representation or other notice given to the public or members thereof, directly or indirectly, by a dentist on behalf of himself, his facility, his partner or associate, or any dentist affiliated with the dentist or his facility by any means or method for the purpose of inducing purchase, sale or use of dental methods, services, treatments, operations, procedures or products, or to promote continued or increased use of such dental methods, treatments, operations, procedures or products.

"Analgesia" means the diminution or elimination of pain in the conscious patient.

"Approved schools" means those dental schools, colleges, departments of universities or colleges, or schools of dental hygiene currently accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association.

"Competent instructor" means any person appointed to the faculty of a dental school, college or department or a university or a college who holds a license or teacher's license to practice dentistry or dental hygiene in the Commonwealth.

"Conscious sedation" means a minimally depressed level of consciousness that retains the patient's ability to independently and continuously maintain an airway and respond appropriately to physical stimulation and verbal commands, produced by a pharmacologic or nonpharmacologic method, or a combination thereof.

"Dental assistant" means any unlicensed person under the supervision of a dentist who renders assistance for services provided to the patient as authorized under this chapter but shall not include an individual serving in purely a secretarial or clerical capacity.

"Direction" means the presence of the dentist for the evaluation, observation, advice, and control over the performance of dental services.

"General anesthesia" means a controlled state of unconsciousness accompanied by partial or complete loss of protective reflexes, including inability to independently maintain an airway and respond purposefully to physical stimulation or verbal command, produced by a pharmacologic or nonpharmacologic method, or combination thereof.

"General supervision" means that the dentist has evaluated the patient and issued a written order for the specific, authorized services to be provided by a dental hygienist when the dentist is not present in the facility while the services are being provided.

"Local anesthesia" means the loss of sensation or pain in the oral cavity or its contiguous structures generally produced by a topically applied agent or injected agent without causing the loss of consciousness.

"Monitoring general anesthesia and conscious sedation" includes the following: recording and reporting of blood pressure, pulse, respiration, and other vital signs to the attending dentist during the conduct of these procedures and after the dentist has induced a patient and established a maintenance level.

"Monitoring nitrous oxide oxygen inhalation analgesia" means making the proper adjustments of nitrous oxide machines at the request of the dentist during the administration of the sedation, and observing the patient's vital signs.

"Nitrous oxide oxygen inhalation analgesia" means the utilization of nitrous oxide and oxygen to produce a state of reduced sensibility to pain designating particularly the relief of pain without the loss of consciousness.

"Radiographs" means intraoral and extraoral x-rays of the hard and soft oral structures to be used for purposes of diagnosis.

#### **18 VAC 60-20-200. Employment of dental hygienists.**

No dentist shall ~~direct~~ have more than two dental hygienists practicing under direction or general supervision at one and the same time, with the exception that a dentist may issue a written order for services to be provided by a dental hygienist practicing under general supervision in a free clinic, a public health program, or on a voluntary basis.

#### **18 VAC 60-20-210. ~~Required~~ Requirements for direction and general supervision.**

A. In all instances, a licensed dentist assumes ultimate responsibility for determining, on the basis of his diagnosis, the specific treatment the patient will receive and which aspects of treatment will be delegated to qualified personnel in accordance with this chapter and the Code of Virginia.

B. Dental hygienists ~~and assistants~~ shall engage in their respective duties only while in the employment of a licensed dentist or governmental agency or when volunteering services as provided in 18 VAC 60-20-200 and under the direction and control of the employing dentist or the dentist in charge, or the dentist in charge or control of the governmental agency. ~~The dentist shall be present and evaluate the patient during the time the patient is in the facility.~~ Persons acting within the scope of a license issued to them by the board under §[54.1-2725](#) of the Code of Virginia to teach dental hygiene and those persons licensed pursuant to §[54.1-2722](#) of the Code of Virginia providing oral health education and preliminary dental screenings in any setting are exempt from this section.

C. Duties delegated to a dental hygienist under direction shall only be performed when the dentist is present in the facility and available to evaluate the patient during the time services are being provided.

D. Duties that are delegated to a dental hygienist under general supervision shall only be performed if the following requirements are met:

1. The treatment to be provided shall be ordered by a dentist licensed in Virginia and shall be entered in writing in the record. The services noted on the original order shall be rendered within a specific time period, not to exceed seven months from the date the dentist last examined the patient. Upon expiration of the order, the dentist shall have evaluated the patient before writing a new order for treatment.

2. The dental hygienist shall consent in writing to providing services under general supervision.

3. The patient or a responsible adult shall be informed prior to the appointment that no dentist will be present, that no anesthesia can be administered, and that only those services prescribed by the dentist will be provided.

4. Written basic emergency procedures shall be established and in place, and the hygienist shall be capable of implementing those procedures.

E. General supervision shall not preclude the use of direction when, in the professional judgment of the dentist, such direction is necessary to meet the individual needs of the patient.

#### **18 VAC 60-20-220. Dental hygienists.**

A. The following duties shall only be delegated to dental hygienists under direction with the dentist being present:

1. Scaling and root planing of natural and restored teeth using hand instruments, rotary instruments and ultrasonic devices under anesthesia administered by the dentist.

~~2. Polishing of natural and restored teeth using air polishers.~~

~~3~~ 2. Performing an ~~original or clinical~~ initial examination of teeth and surrounding tissues including the charting of carious lesions, periodontal pockets or other abnormal conditions for assisting the dentist in the diagnosis.

~~4~~ 3. Subgingival irrigation or subgingival application of Schedule VI medicinal agents in accordance with §54.1-3408 of the Code of Virginia.

~~5. Duties appropriate to the education and experience of the dental hygienist and the practice of the supervising dentist, with the exception of those listed as nondelegable in 18VAC60-20-190.~~

B. The following duties shall only be delegated to dental hygienists and may be delegated by written order to be performed under general supervision without the dentist being present:

1. Scaling and root planing of natural and restored teeth using hand instruments, rotary instruments and ultrasonic devices without anesthesia.

2. Polishing of natural and restored teeth using air polishers.

3. Performing a clinical examination of teeth and surrounding tissues including the charting of carious lesions, periodontal pockets or other abnormal conditions for further evaluation and diagnosis by the dentist.

4. Duties appropriate to the education and experience of the dental hygienist and the practice of the supervising dentist, with the exception of those listed in subsection A of this section and those listed as nondelegable in 18 VAC 60-20-190.

C. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted so as to prevent a licensed dental hygienist from providing educational services, assessment, screening or data collection for the preparation of preliminary written records for evaluation by a licensed dentist.